1: Childs M-S (1924-1940) 1949 FP13 Mbundu FP13

593 only by a sister), and *mukãi* (sister, spoken only by a brother). In
[561] a polygynous household each of the wives is mother to all the
children and each of the children is *kuwa* or *manja*[1] to all the others.
848 Illegitimate children are not stigmatized but since they belong to
567 the mother they have a distinct designation.[2] Slaves or former
slaves have a status within the household and village which to the
ordinary observer does not differ from that of the children: they
are treated much as the children and they may carry on in all
matters social and economic much as though they were members
of the family. I have noticed, however, that when there is a call for
labour, the lot falls oftener to one of these 'children-born-by-day'[3]
whether he was a war-captive or a pawn.

567 Both slavery and the polygynous household, two institutions
595 manifestly and intimately inter-related, are still a part of the
178 Umbundu social structure, but neither the one nor the other now
has the importance which it formerly had. Neither of these
institutions is part of the present and personal experience of the
great majority of Umbundu households.

Kinship

596 *Blood Relatives* (*Epata*). The relationships of the wider kinship
602 groups are for the most part extensions of those of the household.
621 The child learns them very early in life owing to the fact that the
village community into which he is born is only a part of this
larger kinship group. Nearly all of the villagers belong to the
same *epata* or extended family, which includes both lines of
descent. Most of them belong to the father's family (*olase*), and
the mother's family (*olaima*) may also be represented. The fact is
that most of the adults of the village are father or mother to
nearly every child and most of the children are brothers or sisters.
Those of his coevals who do not bear this relation to him are
otherwise related and are also potential spouses or potential
relatives-in-law.

[1] This distinction *yonjakai* (lit. '*of* the jealousy *of* women') may be made but it is not applied in ordinary speech.

[2] *Ondili a ngunda-la-ana* (lit. 'child *of* grass-with-mother').

[3] *Ondili-ou-ciãua-katanya*. Cf. 'child of my calves', Luganda expression and attitudes, L. P. Mair, *An African People in the Twentieth Century* (London, 1934), p. 32 f.

there was a great metal industry in Viye, where hoes were made for trade with the interior; later the wholesale manufacture of hoes was taken over by Ndulo, where there are the best and most easily accessible deposits of iron. In exchange for hoes they received palm-oil or cattle from other regions, or salt, rum, or goods from the coast. Other regional specialisations were :- Kasongo and the Sele country for palm-oil, Cikuma for tobacco, cattle from Ngalangi, Kalukembe, and, further south, corn-meal from Civaka, Civolo and Bailundu.[1]

SOCIAL ORGANISATION AND POLITICAL STRUCTURE

KINSHIP AND DESCENT

The Ovimbundu appear to have a system of double descent which has not yet been fully reported and analysed, and whose nature is not very clear from existing accounts. The following outline is based on information given by Childs,[2] who unfortunately details the functions but not the composition of the kin groups concerned. In a review[3] of Childs' book, Barnes has formulated a descent system which would be congruent with Childs' description, and his suggestions are outlined here.

The epota

Childs translates epota as "blood relatives", and his use of the term suggests that it may have either a general or a limited sense. Thus he writes (p.42): "Nearly all of the villagers belong to the same epota or extended family, which includes both lines of descent. Most of them belong to the father's family *(olusa)*, and the mother's family *(olusina)* may also be represented." And, in another context, (p.44): "When an Ovimbundu speaks of his epota (family) in the sense of a large and widespread organisation with a recognised head....it is generally his olusina [mother's family] to which he refers."

The olusa and the olusina

Every Ovimbundu belongs in the first instance to two distinct kin groupings: the *olusa*, to whom he is related through his father, and the olusina to whom he is related through his mother. Uterine brothers and sisters belong to the same *olusa* and *olusina*, but to the male and female side respectively, according to sex. (see below.) A difficulty has arisen because both Childs[4] and Childs appear to regard both groups as bilateral. Childs states explicitly that the *olusa*, or epota lia tate (family of my father) includes *all* relatives on the father's side, and the olusina or epota lia nai (family of my mother) *all* relatives on the mother's side. Childs writes (p.45) "Bearing in mind *their bilateral nature* ..... the functions of [the *olusa* and the olusina] may be summarised...". But from his summary it is obvious that the *olusa* and the olusina cannot be bilateral groups, neither can they have parallel descent systems of any kind. Marriage is patrilocal, and the olusa forms a local unit while the olusina is

(1) Childs, 1949, p.35.
(2) Ibid.
(3) Man, September 1950, p.127.
(4) Op.cit., pp.193-8.

3: Hambly E-5 (1929-1930) 1934 FF13 Mbundu FF13

Kukululu or *sekululu*. These terms are applicable to my father's father's brother, my father's father's brother's wife; my father's father's sister's husband; and my mother's father (the reciprocal *ewekulu* describes the reciprocals, brother's son's son; husband's brother's son's son; wife's brother's son's son; daughter's son). 601

Moikulu. This designation, which is derived from *mai*, meaning mother, and *kulu*, an old person, is applied to my father's mother (reciprocal, *ewekulu yenge*, son's son). *Moikulu* also means my father's father's sister; my mother's mother; my mother's mother's brother's wife; and my mother's mother's sister (the reciprocal is *ewekulu* which equals the English reciprocals brother's son's son; daughter's son; husband's daughter's child; and sister's daughter's child).

This completes the second generation of ascendants.

NOTE: Nganga's wife uses the names *moikulu* and *kukululu* for those relatives of her husband to whom Nganga himself applies those terms. These relatives call Nganga's wife *ewekulu*.

TABLE D

(*See Table E IV and V*, also *Table F II, IV and V*)

SONS OF NGONGA'S DESCENDANTS

Nuvulu or *useli* is my first-born son. Other sons are *ovocio*, meaning child. *Ovocio olume* means a male child. *Ovocio okoi* is a female child. *Useli* also means a first daughter (the reciprocal for these terms is *tate*, meaning father).

Ovocinge means my child. I apply the word, not only to my own children, but to my elder brother's son (reciprocal, *tate*, father's younger brother); to my elder brother's daughter; and to my younger brother's son.

Ndatembo. The word is applied to my son's wife; my daughter's husband; my elder brother's son's wife; my elder brother's daughter's husband; and my younger brother's son's wife (the same word *ndatembo* is used for the reciprocals of these terms; namely, husband's father; wife's father; husband's father's younger brother; wife's father's younger brother; and husband's father's elder brother).

The foregoing classificatory system of relationship is not peculiar to the Ovimbundu, but is a cultural trait of many Bantu-speaking and some Sudanic-speaking Negroes. The similarity of the Umbundu system to those of surrounding peoples in Rhodesia and the Congo will be pointed out in chapters dealing with culture contacts. 601 171

When describing marriage rites reference was made to the fact that a wife goes to live near her husband's relatives; the system is therefore patrilocal. The limited family consists of husband and wife (or wives) with their children. The greatest number of wives observed in the family of a commoner was four, and in the family of a king eleven. A household sometimes contains adopted children, also domestic slaves (pawns) who are working to pay off debts for their maternal uncles. An extended family may include a grandfather and his wife, his sons, their wives and children, and his unmarried daughters, with classes and nomenclatures mentioned in the foregoing tables. 591 592 [595] [597] [561] 596

The phrase *epata lia tate* (or *alua*) means "family of my father" and includes all relatives on the father's side. The words *epata lia* 613